

# The Quest of Betty Lancey

By MAGDA F. WEST

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## CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

"That's what I'm trying to do," replied Johnny. "I'm attempting to find out how that man got in. Here it is. See?"

His finger had touched the spring for the baseboard, which was at least two feet high, suddenly split and swung discordantly back, revealing a square hole and a clumsily constructed panel opening directly into the house next door! This building was lower than the Desterle home, for while the hole in the baseboard ran from the floor in the Desterle house, it was merely eighteen inches or less below the ceiling of the room into which the excited group was gazing. Well furnished, lined with books, and illuminated by a green shaded reading lamp on a low table, the room apparently served as a library. Portraits of high-choked, uncomfortable-looking statesmen filled the niches between the book cases, and on the floor beneath the trap door rested a bronze plaque, very significantly the size of the trap door.

"What do you know about that?" asked Johnny, narrating the appearance and disappearance of the stranger.

Because he was the smallest of them all, Johnny was delegated to creep through the hole and investigate the adjoining house. The others divided into relays and began another branch of the disquisition.

"Say, Farley, go telephone my paper about this, will you?" begged Johnny in a whisper. "They're long on extras up there, you know, and they might want to get one out on this. Honest, boys, I can't say I—much in for making this twelve-foot desperado dive for life before it, but I guess it's so long. Put the panel back; I think you'd better. And he swung down through the trapdoor.

Meanwhile the first relay went outside to reconnoiter. The block was a crowded one with the houses standing shoulder to shoulder, as closely as masons might put them. Midway in the block the name of the street changed from Ramikin terrace to Briarsweet place. The Desterle house was 56 Ramikin terrace, and the house into which Johnny had disappeared was 94 Briarsweet place. Twenty years previous the street had been a fashionable thoroughfare, but it had gradually become relegated to the second best, with respectable boarding houses of the variety usually catalogued as "shabby genteel." Some of the old houses had been remodeled into flats, and in only a few were the owners now residing. Of these the major part were those sentimental women who, long after their families are married and gone away, still cling to the old home that welcomed them in their days of bridal joys and happy youth, or of the conservative set now pushed out of the lead of the procession of fashionable society by the influx of the newer and faster ideas of life and living.

Such a family had long tenanted 94 Briarsweet place. The owner, Mark S. Flanders, was one of the few old-style lawyers who are fortunate to have husbanded their acquired competence before the lean years of age and ossification have descended upon them. One of the first settlers in the town, the Flanders residence had at one time been the admiration and the eye-widener of the country over, but of late, and especially since the death of Flanders' wife, both the old mansion and the old lawyer had been reckoned among the hopeless by the ultra-smart set.

Flanders had always borne a reputation for the highest integrity and greatest personal honor. He had even managed to keep his record while serving his city two terms as Mayor. That the bricks and stone of the supposedly well-bred Flanders mansion should have opened up surreptitious entrances to the plebeian boarding house next door seemed incredible, especially in connection with a murder.

Liberal usages of telephones and directories elicited the information that Flanders had sailed quietly and unheralded for Europe a week previously. Gorin got Dunwiddy, Flanders' partner, on the wire and asked him about it. Dunwiddy was out of sorts at the call. The clock showed 4:30 a. m. and Dunwiddy was in the most delectable division of his early morning snooze.

"Yes, yes," he shouted over the telephone, "this is Thomas Dunwiddy, Flanders' partner. Who are you and what do you want at this disgraceful hour of the morning? An Associated Press man? Well, you've got impudence to get a man up at this hour of the morning! Flanders may be implicated in the Wayne murder? Nonsense! Where is Flanders? Minding his own business, where you ought to be. I don't know anything about him. He sailed for Europe the 15th and I hope he's there by now. A panel out through between the closet and his house? Dear me, that is unfortunate.

Come to recall it now, Mr. Flanders let his house for the season just before he left. I did not see the tenant, but have the leases on file. I think the man's name is Hamley Hackley, and I don't know anything about him except that he is an Englishman who has lived in the tropics. Now, my dear sir, I beg of you to keep the Flanders name out of any affiliation with this unfortunate affair, if you possibly can. You understand me, of course. Yes, I suppose you may see the leases, but you must be careful what moves you make, international complications, you know, and all that. Good-by."

Gorin whistled as he hung up the receiver, and repeated over and over again the name "Hamley Hackley."

"Humph," he said, and dropped another nickel in the telephone slot, as he gave the call, to direct his office to cable London and find out if they could discover anything about Mr. Hackley.

A very careful external examination of the premises at 94 Briarsweet Place was made. There was a small back yard, grass laid, and neat and dignified, with a few tulips a-bloom along the path that led to the primly latticed back gate. The shades all over the house were closely drawn and there was no indication of Johnny nor any other sign of life any place at all about. A quart of milk and a small bottle of cream had been left on the back steps, and a morning paper blown by the wind rotated between the porch and the back walk.

"Uxtry, Uxtry," shrieked a newsboy on the sidewalk. There was the scrape of opening windows along the street from adjacent houses and many a tousled head and nightrobed figure cautiously shielding its deficiencies of costume by deftly balanced window shades and draperies bid in the smelly sheets as the gamins added his thrilling climax.

"All about the escape of the dreadful monster, the man-aperilla, from its cage in the park."

Gorin leaped the fence and made for the lad. The extra was principally a matter of headlines glaring and ink-smudged, chronicling the escape of the unknown beast, appended to the news stories that had gone through the earlier editions.

"Whew!" whistled Gorin, "this looks pretty bad! Nice men, I must say."

## CHAPTER VII

Frankel and Sothorn went down the hall from Betty Lancey's room after the clerk and his companion, who was so excitedly seeking the papers that had blown out of the window and a couple of bell boys.

"We'll go right down through the bar, it's the quickest," they overheard the clerk say as the couple passed to await the elevator. The two newspaper men ran down to the next floor, caught the car at the second landing and rode to the first floor with the clerk and his plainly excited companion.

The bar was closed and while one clerk procured the keys for entrance Frankel covertly watched the man, and Sothorn nonchalantly strolled over to the clerk behind the desk.

"Who is that man?" he queried. "I don't mean the little Jew, but the dark, handsome fellow there? He has such a beautiful wife, looks like a woman I knew in Paris once."

"So?" asked the clerk. "They have been here at frequent intervals this last year or two. Don't know much about them, except that his name is Harcourt—Harold Harcourt—and they always register from India. They've got cash to burn."

"What's the matter with him now?" questioned Sothorn. The clerk laughed.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered. "He came bustling down here awhile ago shouting about some documents. Let him blow out of his window and lit on the fire escape opposite. He wanted somebody to go up and help him get out on the fire escape. Tore around as if he was afire."

"He was crazy, too," supplemented one of the bell boys. "Old lady in E22 where he went to get out of the window wouldn't unlock the door to let us at the fire escape. Don't blame her, but her hubby made her come to the scratch and let us in, and she was the tickledest when the papers were gone. They're going down in the court now, to hunt them up."

Frankel by now had joined the clerk at the door of the bar and was enjoying that functionary's attempts to make the key yield in the lock.

"What's on?" he asked, carelessly, "a riot or a raid?"

"Nothing at all, sir, private business, private business only," interrupted Harcourt, with the air of giving Frankel his conge.

Frankel, however, refused to accept such a gratuity and followed the two men, and the several bell boys, one with a pocket light and the others with various boxes of matches through the darkened barroom. The glasses

and mirrors and decanters gleamed dully in the half-light and the tiled floors were slippery with recent scrubbing. The door that opened upon the court was heavily chained, barred and bolted, but it swung wide at last and Harcourt clutching the pocket light from the grasp of its bearer flared it into every corner and crevice of the clean cemented rectangle.

"Nothing here, sir, nothing here," commented the clerk. "What was the nature of the papers, if you please?"

Harcourt's face was livid. He rumped his thick hair nervously with his long white fingers, oblivious of all his surroundings. At the third repetition of the interrogation he roused from his stupor and remarked:

"A picture of my wife, a very valuable hand-made print, one I prize for its associations as much as for its intrinsic worth, and some extremely important passports. I would not have lost them for half a million dollars."

The bell boys poked around in a desultory fashion into imaginary crevices that did not exist. The clerk led the way back to the office and Harcourt absently met the claims of the buttons upon his pockets.

"Excuse me, Mr. Harcourt," said a boy at his elbow, "but I guess you'd better hurry back upstairs to your wife. She just sent a call down that a strange young woman had run in there and said she was sick, and that we'd better send someone up to take care of her."

Harcourt thanked the boy and made for the elevator with all speed. Sothorn and Frankel instinctively flashed to each other with their eyes the one word:

"Betty!"

"Think I'll go up and see if Betty needs any help," suggested Sothorn; "you'd better stay down here. Frankel, and see what you can skirnish up."

Sothorn made his way back to the "E" floor cautiously. He went to Betty's room and knocked on the door. It flew quietly ajar and he was greeted with a chorus of:

"What'd you get, Betty?"

"Isn't Betty," grinned Sothorn; "isn't she here?"

"No, haven't seen anything of her since you left but her shoes, that she's kicked off there," said Hank Smith.

"She must have found a vein," added Larry Morris.

"Most likely a vein found her," added Sothorn, narrating the experiences of below stairs. "Let's walk around that way and see."

At the bend in the corridor Larry's feet entangled themselves in something soft. He stooped and picked it up, and gingerly spread it out to the light. It was a woman's shirtwaist of white linen with a little blue stripe, and the monogram "B. L." heavily embroidered on the sleeve.

"Betty Lancey's waist," cried Sothorn. "Where is Betty?"

"I'm going to find out," retorted Larry. Together they all strode in to Harcourt's door. It was open and from within sounded the angered tones of a woman's decidedly nasal voice.

"Are you sure you wasn't dreaming?" came the words, "what could have become of the girl? If she was here, how did she get away so quick? Especially if she was sick!"

"She wasn't sick," replied Harcourt. "She must have been a thief, trying to impose herself on my wife's confidence. Well, as she's gone now, my good woman, you can go, too. There's nothing here for you to do."

"No," burst in Larry, whose worry over Betty was now at fever heat, "but there's something here for you to do. That girl is a friend of mine, and if there's any harm come to her, you'll suffer for it. Here is her shirtwaist—it's been torn off her body—do you see that—and where's she? Look at that blood! She started out half an hour ago to come over here and speak to your wife, and she hasn't been seen since, but we find this garment of hers, blood-stained and kicked into the corner at the foot of the corridor. What have you done with its wearer?"

Mrs. Harcourt, still in the silken negligee and the diamonds, flung her hands wearily behind her head, bent like an overweighted reed, and passed beyond into her dressing room.

"This is an outrage, an outrage," stormed Harcourt. "At this hour of the morning to interrupt a guest of the house in this wanton fashion! You'll pay for these insults!"

"Perhaps," said Larry Morris, "and in the meanwhile if you or your wife attempt to leave this hotel till we have found Betty Lancey, you'll find yourself face to face with a warrant that will land you in jail, charging you with either her murder or her abduction. Do you understand me, Mr. Harcourt?"

"Oh, say, Larry," hinted Hank Smith, "don't you think you're going too far? A man has his rights, you know."

"Indeed I know," said Larry, "and that's why I'm going to find Betty. This matter doesn't look straight to me. Where's Frankel gone, anyway?"

"Don't know. Nothing more doing to-night for me," announced Hartley. "I'm going home and to bed, boys. Good-by."

"Here, too," chimed in a chorus. But Larry Morris was silent. He left the boys at the corner, then sought out and dug from their slumbers an official or two whom he knew well, and swore out a warrant against the Harcourts, charging them with abduction of Betty Lancey with intent to kill!

"Don't care if I go down the road for it," he told himself. "You can't tell me something hasn't happened to Betty. I can seem to feel her calling to me, there's an instinct tells me she's in fearful trouble. Hello, what's this—another extra. So that beast got out, did it? Wonder where it went to!"

(To be continued.)

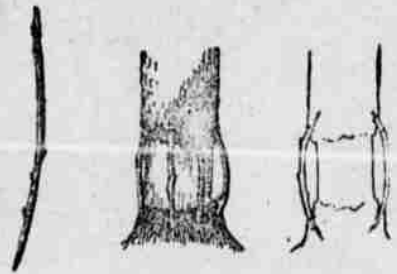
# MARK AND GARDEN

## Bridge Grafting.

Where trees are found girdled in the spring, the only method of saving them is by the practice of what is known as bridge-grafting.

If young trees be girdled in late spring just as growth is beginning, they may be successfully treated by binding about the wounded parts a heavy covering of smooth, tenacious, soft clay. It is safer, however, to insert a few long scions, as shown in the accompanying picture. The sap circulation of the tree, cut off by the wound made by the rodents, is resumed through the scions, which become a part of the tree—enlarging and growing together until, in after years, only a slight enlargement or "bulge" on the trunk of the tree thus treated will be noticeable.

In bridge-grafting the wounds should be made clean and smooth with



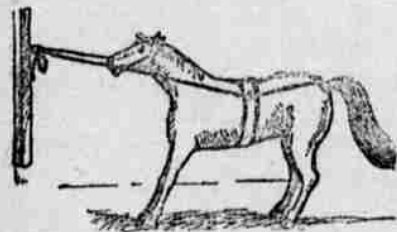
a sharp knife and covered entirely with grafting wax. The scions should be cut a trifle longer than the span to be bridged, so that, when they are inserted, their curving form will tend to keep them firmly fixed in position. The two ends of the scions are cut to a thin wedge form. Incisions are made in the bark with a narrow chisel—those above the wound sloping upward and those below sloping downward. Insert the scions firmly and wax heavily and securely all wounds made in the operation, especial care being exercised to press the wax firmly and neatly about the points of union of scions with the body of the tree.

## The Useful Silo.

The silo is a text which is always inspiring to the man who knows its value and it cannot be preached from too often, writes S. C. Miller. Wherever it is seen it denotes farming. It solves the problem of turning into the highest efficiency that portion of the corn crop which fails to reach the desired maturity as feed. The silo can be filled at less expense than the same amount of dry feed can be cared for and it makes better feed. This is, after all, the main point to consider. Dairymen have learned that when cows are kept in the stable for five to seven months they cannot return as satisfactory profits if they are confined to a ration of dry feed alone. Ensilage gives succulence and is very much easier to masticate and digest than dry corn fodder. There is also a great saving of labor in feeding ensilage, over feeding dry corn fodder. The initial expense keeps many a silo from decorating the landscape, but it is good practice to economize in other directions to provide for it. Once built and rightly built it will not have to be renewed for many years, so the cost is spread out so thinly that it cuts no great figure in the business of feeding.

## Curing a Halter Breaker.

Whenever I have a horse that breaks his halter by pulling at the manger I take a small rope, pass it around his tall and through loops on a girth at either side, then on through the rings at either side of the halter and fasten the two ends to the manger ring. When the horse pulls on the



halter it produces such unexpected results that he soon stops this bad habit.—A Benson, in Farm and Home.

## Incubators and Brooders.

The only way to raise chickens in large numbers in a short space of time and have them at the right time to get the biggest prices for them is to use incubators and brooders. By the use of the hen for hatching and brooding, enough chickens can not be raised in a season to make it pay. Many of my customers tell me that they would rather take care of 100 chicks in a brooder than to care for one old hen and her brood. You can set as many eggs in a medium-sized incubator as you can put under ten sitting hens. With the machines you have absolute

control at all times. No lice to fight. No danger of eggs being broken or chilled during incubation. Eggs and chicks perfectly safe at all times. No work at all compared with the work that ten fussy old hens would cause you.—Agricultural Epitomist.

## Renting a Farm.

The following is from the Almanac and Encyclopedia for 1910, published by the International Harvester Company:

"The greatest risk is always on the landlord's side in the rental of property. He is putting his property into the possession and care of another, who may be a person of doubtful utility. It is well to observe these rules and cautions: Do not trust to a verbal lease—let it be in writing, signed and sealed. Its stipulations then become commands and can be enforced. Let it be signed in duplicate, so that each party may have an original.

"Be careful in selecting your tenant. There is more in the man than there is in the bond. Insert such covenants as to repairs, manner of use, and in restraint of waste as the circumstances call for. As to particular stipulations examine leases drawn by those who have had long experience in renting farms, and adopt such as meet your case. There should be covenants against assigning and underletting.

"If the tenant is of doubtful responsibility, make the rent payable in installments. A covenant that the crops shall remain in the lessor's till the lessee's contracts with him have been fulfilled is valid against the lessee's creditors. In the ordinary case of renting farms on shares the courts will treat the crops as the joint property of lord and tenant, and thus protect the former's rights. Every lease should contain stipulations for forfeiture and re-entry in case of non-payment or breach of any covenants.

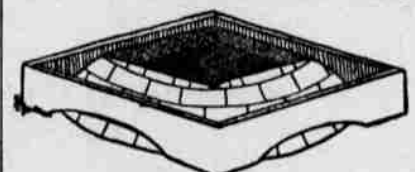
## Fresh Manure.

Authorities say that fresh manure loses in the process of decay from 26 to 70 per cent of its original weight. Some tests conducted by the Cornell Experiment Station showed that two tons of horse manure exposed in a pile for five months lost 57 per cent of its gross weight, 60 per cent of its nitrogen, 47 per cent of its potash. Five tons of cow manure exposed for the same length of time in a compact pile lost, through leaching and dissipation of gases, 49 per cent in gross weight, 41 per cent of its nitrogen, 19 per cent of its phosphoric acid and 8 per cent of its potash.

A ton of average fresh horse manure from animals fed on ordinary balanced ration, contains about 14 pounds potash.

## Concrete Platform for Cistern.

Make a square box of 2x10-inch stuff, any size you want the platform. Six feet square is a nice size. Cut out the pieces as shown in the cut so the frame will fit the crown of the cistern. Clean off all the earth and old matter. Set the frame level and about two inches lower than the cistern



curb. This will give fall sufficient to lead all water away from the pump. Make a mixture of cement and sand or gravel. Mix it together, dry, then add water to make a stiff mortar. Pack in the form and smooth off with a straight-edged board. Run a seam from each corner to the crown to prevent cracking.—Denver Post.

## Cost of Feed.

During an experiment in Cornell University a few years ago the average feed cost for eggs throughout the year was about 9 cents per dozen. Other experimenters give the cost of eggs in winter at 15 cents per dozen and in summer 8½ cents. Under the present prices of feed eggs would cost about 12 cents per dozen, but it must be remembered that on the farm the hen picks up the most part of her living from the waste material that is scattered over the farm, so that the cost of a dozen eggs is a very small item of cash outlay.

## Hints About the Farm.

All cows that are weak, extremely thin and coughing must be removed from the herd.

Let the sheep glean over the grain and cornfields if the land is free from burs and cockles.

Pails, cans, strainers, coolers and every other utensil that comes in contact with the milk should be washed and sterilized.

Farmers who have given cowpeas a fair trial have almost invariably continued their use along with their other staple crops.

Frequent plowing will give a larger average crop with an equal amount of fertilizer, but it costs more to produce and is more work to harvest.

With good grass land it is considered that the plan of moderate top dressing with chemicals brings a larger income for the labor employed than any other system of management.